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Whittier's

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"Strange children of the dark and gloomy mine!
Ye radiant jewels, bright as Sheba's eyes,
That flame with colors of such passionate dyes
As rainbows cannot match, nor sunset skies,
Though born of darkness where no sun can shine."

Ca 10-2533

The Diamond.

HARDNESS 10. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·5.

THE diamond cutters of India call a rough diamond "Labora," because its beauty cannot be developed except by skillful and patient work. The art of cutting a diamond was not brought into Europe from the East until 1295. A few centuries later, Louis de Berquen, of Bruges, discovered that diamond dust was better for the task than corundum, which until then had been used by the French lapidaries; and Vincenzio Peruzzi, of Venice, in the latter half of the 17th century, for the first time cut a diamond into a brilliant, that is, with thirty-three facets above, and twenty-five below the girdle. The process has been made, by the application of steam power, much less expensive, and a diamond can now be cut in a few days when by the old method of hand labor alone it would take months. It cost five thousand pounds, and two years labor to cut the famous Regent diamond in 1712; the Kohinoor was re-cut in England in 1862 in thirty-eight days, at a cost of eight thousand pounds.

The purchaser of a diamond, or any precious stone, should remember that its value depends in no slight degree on the artistic quality of the lapidary's work upon it, and that it is always better to buy of a dealer who has had practical experience in these matters directly with the diamond cutter, than of one whose knowledge is merely theoretical. Diamonds are found in nearly every part of the world, but the most famous mines are the Golconda in India, the Lerro di Frio and Matto Grosso of Brazil, and the Kimberly, Dutoits Pan, and Jagersfontein of Africa. The stones taken from the last-mentioned mine, which has

been recently opened, are of surpassing purity, and already command fancy prices in the market.

Diamonds occur in nearly all colors, the three shades most in demand being blue white, steel white, and pure white. The steel white has no perceptible color, but their lustre resembles that of polished steel. They are rare Indian stones and always obtain fancy prices. A blue white stone has only the faintest tinge of blue. The most complete collection of colored diamonds in the world is in the Vienna Museum. Their order in regard to rarity and value is as follows: blue, red, green, white, olive, black, fire colored, yellow. The blue diamond when perfect in color, which must be darker and unlike the soft velvety shade of the sapphire, is the rarest of precious stones, and has only been found in the mines of India. A coal black diamond weighing 350 carats, was exhibited at the World's Fair in London, in 1851, as a great curiosity. It was so hard that it resisted every effort made to polish it.

An English jeweler, who had a truly artistic love for his profession, once spent ten years in collecting diamonds that could serve to form an ornament in the shape of a spray of flowers. This unique jewel is mentioned in an English work on precious stones, with regret that the price received for it did not show a just appreciation of its beauty. It would meet with more prompt approval and praise now, when the increased demand for fancy stones of every kind proves a growing love for them among purchasers of gems. The old belief that the diamond would endow its wearer with constancy and purity made it the favorite stone for the betrothal ring. Its brilliancy and its immortality give it a strong claim to its place as the first of all precious stones, a rank it has held for centuries and will hold for many more as the most brilliant and peerless object in nature.

Rubies.

HARDNESS 9. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 4.

THE color of a perfect ruby matches exactly in shade the blood of a freshly killed pigeon, and its purity is often tested by placing it beside a drop of pigeon's blood. It owes its color to the fact that one-sixth part of its chemical constitution is chromic acid. There are four kinds of rubies: The oriental ruby, blood red in color and but little inferior to the diamond in hardness or the power to receive by polishing a brilliant vitreous lustre; the spinel ruby, rose red in color; the balas-ruby, pale in color and of but little value; and the rubicelle, which is an inferior variety of the spinel, and yellowish red in color. The finest rubies come from the kingdom of Pegu, in Burmah, and as this province has now become an English possession, London will probably be the most famous market for these jewels, as it already is for diamonds. There are comparatively few fine and large rubies in existence. Among the English crown jewels are five, some of them of great historical interest; one originally belonging to the Black Prince, is in the crown itself; the Lahore rubies are set in a necklace and bear Persian inscriptions with the dates 1070, 1125, 1153; and the large table ruby in the coronation ring belonged to Edward the Confessor. The ruby stands among precious stones next in rank to the diamond, and often, when of the same size and perfect in every respect, exceeds it in price.

The Emerald.

SPECIFIC GRAVITY 2·7. HARDNESS 7·5 TO 8.

The emerald burns intensely bright,
With radiance of an olive light;
This is the faith that highest shines,
No need of charity declines,
And seeks no rest and shuns no strife,
In working out a holy life.

THE bulk of an emerald is large in proportion to its weight, one of equal weight with a sapphire, for instance, being nearly twice as large. A rich, soft, deep, velvety shade of green is the color demanded for a perfect emerald, but the stone occurs in every tint from a greenish blue to a pinkish brown. The finest come from Peru, the next in quality are found in the Tyrolian Alps, in Bavaria, where they are cut from the steep rocks in which they are imbedded, by miners who are held by ropes over the frightful abyss. The ancients thought it a good omen to dream of an emerald and that to own one of unusual perfection was sure to bring renown and success. Miss Anna Louise Cary owns one of the most superb emeralds known to be in the possession of any private person. It once belonged to Queen Isabella of Spain, and was bought for fifty thousand dollars at the sale of the jewels in Paris a few years ago.

The Sapphire.

HARDNESS 9. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 4.

The azure light of sapphire stone
Resembles that celestial throne;
A symbol of each simple heart
That grasps in hope the better part,
Whose life each holy deed combines,
And in the light of virtue shines.

SAPPHIRES come from Ceylon almost exclusively. They are found in other parts of the world, but never in sufficient quantity or perfection to form a market for their sale. The value of a sapphire does not increase in proportion to size as enormously as the ruby. In trade it is known by four names: The male sapphire, which is the perfect stone of a rich, clear, soft blue shade; the female sapphire, whose color is specked with white; the very pale blue stone called a water sapphire; and the cat sapphire, which is of a blackish or greenish blue tint and not often transparent. The remarkable coldness of the sapphire to the touch, due to its density, gave rise to the superstition that it would extinguish fire and keep its wearer chaste in thought and deed, losing its beauty if worn by an evil minded person. For this supposed virtue it was chosen for the stone to be set in the ring worn after their installation by the Bishops of the Roman Church. The largest known sapphire is called the "Wooden Spoon Seller," from the trade of the man who was lucky enough to find it. It was also named the "Respoli." It was purchased by the French jeweler Pirrch for 6,800 pounds, and is now in the Musée de Mineralogie at Paris. It weighs $132\frac{1}{16}$ carats.

The Pearl.

A LIST of jewels would be incomplete without mention of the pearl. Its beauty gives it place nigh to the four most precious stones, and it is chosen as the favorite jewel for the young, its pure white color making it appropriate for the delicacy of the youthful complexion. It is found in Ceylon, the Persian Gulf, and in many of the rivers of Europe, England, Scotland, South America and the United States. The finest, however, come from Ceylon. The Conch shells of Nassau yield pearls, sometimes of good size and purity. These beautiful gems are sold by weight, and the price increases rapidly with size. They are very difficult to match and for this reason the Romans called them "unio." In rare instances they are found of irregular shape and are then called "perles baroque." In the Devonshire cabinet is a very fine specimen of this class set to represent a mermaid, and another in the Green Vaults of Dresden claims to be a faithful likeness of the court dwarf of Charles II. of Spain. When pearls are hollow they are called "phantasy pearls," when of the largest size "paragons," when they are the size of a cherry they are called "diadem" or "head" pearls, small ones are named "ounce' pearls, and the tiniest are "seed" pearls. A perfect pearl must be either perfectly round or pear shaped, of a pure white color, slightly transparent and it must possess the peculiar lustre characteristic of the gem. They derive nothing from art, all attempts to increase their beauty resulting in injury.

Various Gems.

SPINEL RUBY.

HARDNESS 8. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·5 TO 4.

THIS gem was called by the ancients carbuncle. It is most commonly red, but occurs in a great variety of shades of blue, brown and yellow. It is found in clay and in the sand of rivers, in Ceylon, Ava and Mysore. It is cut as a brilliant, with diamond dust, and is a favorite gem for pendants, bracelets and necklaces.

ALEXANDRITE.

HARDNESS 8·5. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·6.

This is a very rare precious stone, and is at present in great demand, fashion having stamped it with approval. It is when seen by daylight green in color with a rich russet tinge, but artificial light will change it to a full deep purple shade. It is found in Siberia.

CHRYSOBERYL.

HARDNESS 8.5. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·5 TO 3·8.

The name of this gem is derived from the Greek and is expressive of its color; it is also called cymophane. Its color is asparagus and olive green, sometimes tinged with brown, yellow, gray or white. It is found in Brazil, Pegn, Ceylon and Siberia. The largest chrysoberyl known is in the possession of the government at Rio de Janiero. The specimens that occur of pure transparent color are valuable and are favorite stones among the Brazilians.

TOPAZ.

HARDNESS 8. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·4 TO 3·6.

The topaz has, when perfect, a beautiful clear wine yellow. It is generally cut as a brilliant and is used for all kinds of jewelry. It is found in almost every part of the world. In the French Imperial Bibliotheque are several engraved topazes, and a very large and beautiful one is in the Vatican, cut with an Indian Bacchus.

TOURMALINE.

HARDNESS 7 TO 7·5. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 4 TO 4·7.

The Dutch were the first to introduce this precious stone into Europe, importing it from Ceylon. The red tourmaline from Siberia, when perfect in color and transparency and highly polished, is very valuable. These stones have been found in Paris, Maine, but only in rare instances. Tourmalines are also found in other shades besides red. When green they are sometimes called the Brazilian emerald. A small but fine collection of American tourmalines are in the mineralogical museum of Yale College.

AQUAMARINE OR BERYL.

HARDNESS 7 TO 7·5. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 2·7.

The varieties of this stone are divided as follows: Aquamarine, pure pale sky blue; Siberian aquamarine, pale greenish yellow; aquamarine chrysolite, greenish yellow with vivid lustre. The best beryls come from Siberia, Brazil, Scotland and France. The common varieties occur in every part of the globe and are found in great abundance in the United States.

Opal.

Hardness 5·5 to 6·5. Specific Gravity 2 to 2·3.

By the Red Sea the swarthy Arab gleans
The iris, splendent with the crystal's sheen,
Its form semi-circle, full of heaven's own light,
Has justly gained the name of rainbow bright.

The Precious Opal, as the stone is named that is used for jewels, is found in Hungary, Faroe Islands, Saxony and South America. It is cut in a semi-circle, lens, or oval shape, very rarely with facets. The best specimens must be large and display a brilliant play of color, with the lustre described by the Grecian poet "like the delicate complexion of lovely youth." The Empress Josephine possessed a unique opal called the "Great Fire of Troy" from its superb fire sparkles. The opal cannot be imitated. It defies all attempts made to counterfeit its beauty in paste or by using thin plates of mother-of-pearl with inferior stones. These false opals do not deceive the most ignorant admirer of gems.

Hyacinth.

Hardness 7·5. Specific Gravity 4·3 to 4·7.

The Oriental Hyacinth is of a deep red color, sometimes verging toward yellow. It is found in Ceylon, in France, in Siberia, Greenland and Norway. The zircon hyacinth is of a deep cinnamon, and is the most valuable, but is never found perfect.

PERIDOT.

HARDNESS 7. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·5.

The best and most perfect crystals of Peridot come from Egypt, Vatolia and Brazil. The stone is olive green in color and has vitreous lustre. The dark colored stones are the favorites, as they are capable of receiving a high polish. They are cut in rose or brilliant form generally. Louis XIII. brought them into fashion in France and they are favorite jewels yet in Paris.

SIBERIAN GREEN GARNET.

HARDNESS 7·5. SPECIFIC GRAVITY 3·5.

The Siberian Green Garnet is composed of cilicate, calcium, aluminum and chromium. Its color is due to the presence of this last metal in its composition. It comes from the Ural mountains in Russian Siberia. It is the only colored precious stone, except a certain shade of zircon, that is iridescent, like the diamond under gaslight. Green garnets are usually very small. One of $3\frac{3}{8}$ carats is the largest yet known.

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